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New Museum Presents First Solo Museum Exhibition of Works by New York-based Artist Judith Bernstein

New York, NY...The New Museum is pleased to announce the first solo museum exhibition of the work of New York-based artist Judith Bernstein (b. 1942). For over forty years, Judith Bernstein has created expressive drawings and paintings that boldly critique militarism and machismo in a manner that is at once humorous and threatening. The exhibition at the New Museum will include a selection of works ranging from the '60s through the present, including a new **site-specific rendition** of Bernstein's **Signature Piece (1986)**, painted in explosive gestural strokes directly onto the Lobby Gallery windows. For Bernstein, this piece, presented in counterpoint to her large-scale images within the gallery, proclaims her presence and confronts egotistical posturing of artists within the art world and society.

"**Judith Bernstein: HARD**" will be on view in the Lobby Gallery from **October 10, 2012–January 20, 2013**, and is curated by Margot Norton, Curatorial Associate. The exhibition's title, like Bernstein's work, carries an explicit meaning as a sexual reference. Yet it is also semantically elastic, conjuring up multiple associations within layers of political, personal, and artistic struggle.

As a student at Yale in the '60s, Bernstein developed a fascination with the graffiti she found in men's restrooms, images that would later inform the basis of her work. Within these crude sexual scrawlings, Bernstein discovered a window into the male subconscious as well as her own. Her works from this period, predating the wave of feminist artworks in the early '70s, assert female rights and address the underlying connection between sexual aggression and warfare. These mordant antiwar and antisexist statements bristle with the political activism and fury that characterized the Vietnam War era, and continue to resonate viscerally today.

Bernstein's most well-known artworks are her subsequent series of biomorphic screw drawings, which she began in 1969. These monumental pieces provocatively appropriate the image of the screw as a phallic symbol of oppression—as in the expression "being screwed"—and evoke ominous power. One



Judith Bernstein, *HORIZONTAL*, 1973. Charcoal on paper, 108 x 150 in (274.3 x 381 cm). Courtesy the artist and The Box, Los Angeles

of these works, *HORIZONTAL* (1973), was censored from the exhibition “FOCUS: Women’s Work—American Art in 1974” at the Museum of the Philadelphia Civic Center for “lacking redeeming social value,” phraseology commonly applied to pornography. At the time, a petition letter was issued in protest, signed by many significant artists, critics, and curators, including Clement Greenberg, Linda Nochlin, Lucy Lippard, Louise Bourgeois, and the New Museum’s Founding Director, Marcia Tucker.

Bernstein was a founding member of A.I.R. Gallery (the first gallery devoted to showing female artists) where she had her first solo exhibition in 1973. She was an early member of many art and activist organizations including Guerrilla Girls, Art Workers’ Coalition, and Fight Censorship.

About the Artist

Born in 1942 in Newark, NJ, Bernstein has lived and worked in New York City since 1967. She received her MFA from Yale University School of Art in 1967. She has had solo exhibitions at Mitchell Alpus Gallery, New York (2008), The Box, Los Angeles (2009 and 2011), and Alex Zachary, New York (2010). Her work has been included in group exhibitions, such as “The Comfort of Strangers” as part of “Greater New York” at MoMA P.S.1, New York (2010), “The Last Newspaper” at the New Museum, New York (2010), and “The Historical Box” at Hauser & Wirth, Zurich (2011) and London (2012). Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Jewish Museum, New York, and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Exhibition Support

“Judith Bernstein: HARD” is made possible, in part, through the generous support of the Producers Council of the New Museum.

About the New Museum

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

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